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Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 6, 2019

Statement from the Press Secretary Regarding Executive Clemency for Michael Behenna

Today, President Donald J. Trump signed an Executive Grant of Clemency (Full Pardon) for former Army First Lieutenant Michael Behenna of Oklahoma.

In 2009, a military court sentenced Mr. Behenna to 25 years in prison for unpremeditated murder in a combat zone. After judgment, however, the U.S. Army's highest appellate court noted concern about how the trial court had handled Mr. Behenna's claim of self-defense. Additionally, the Army Clemency and Parole Board reduced his sentence to 15 years and paroled him as soon as he was eligible in 2014—just 5 years into his sentence. Upon his release, dozens of Patriot Guard motorcycle riders met Mr. Behenna to escort him back to his home in Oklahoma.

Mr. Behenna's case has attracted broad support from the military, Oklahoma elected officials, and the public. Thirty-seven generals and admirals, along with a former Inspector General of the Department of Defense, signed a brief in support of Mr. Behenna's self-defense claim. Numerous members of the Oklahoma congressional delegation, Oklahoma's then-Governor Mary Fallin, and current Oklahoma Attorney General Mike Hunter have also expressed support for Mr. Behenna. Further, while serving his sentence, Mr. Behenna was a model prisoner. In light of these facts, Mr. Behenna is entirely deserving of this Grant of Executive Clemency.

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